

### CLUB OFFICERS

**President:**  
Fred Alsop

**Vice-President:**  
John Carter

**Secretary:**  
Mary Doran-Bleck

**Treasurer:**  
Duane Swank

**Newsletter Editor:**  
Ted Bleck-Doran

**Webmaster:**  
John Edwards

### LOCATION

ETSU Campus, George L.  
Carter Museum

### HOURS

Business Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. Meetings start at 7:00 PM at ETSU Campus, Brown Hall Science Bldg, Room 312, Johnson City, TN.

- A social gathering is held prior to the business meeting at *EL TORITO* on State of Franklin near ETSU in the Kroger Plaza starting at 5:45 PM. Visitors and those interested in joining MEMRR are invited to attend.

- Work nights are held weekly on Thursday evenings starting at 4:30 PM and lasting until ???

- Open viewing and operating layout is available every Saturday from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM.

From the Conductor's Desk...

## Norfolk & Western Oddball Diesels - Part 6 The ALCo Century Series

ALCO Century 420	
Power type	Diesel-electric
Builder	ALCO
Model	Century 420
Build date	June 1963 - August 1968
Total production	131
AAR wheel arr.	B-B
Gauge	4 ft 8½ in (1,435 mm)
Power output	2000 hp (1.5 MW)



N&W ALCo C420 #415

The ALCO Century 420 was a four-axle, 2000 horsepower (1.5 MW) diesel locomotive of the road switcher type. 131 were built between June 1963 and August 1968. Cataloged as a part of ALCO's "Century" line of locomotives, the C420 was intended to replace the earlier RS-32 model. Since 2005, roughly 30% of C420 production exists. All units ordered by Mississippi State Export, New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad ("Nickel Plate"), and Piedmont & Northern Railway have been scrapped. The two units delivered to the Piedmont & Northern were the first of the Phase II units.

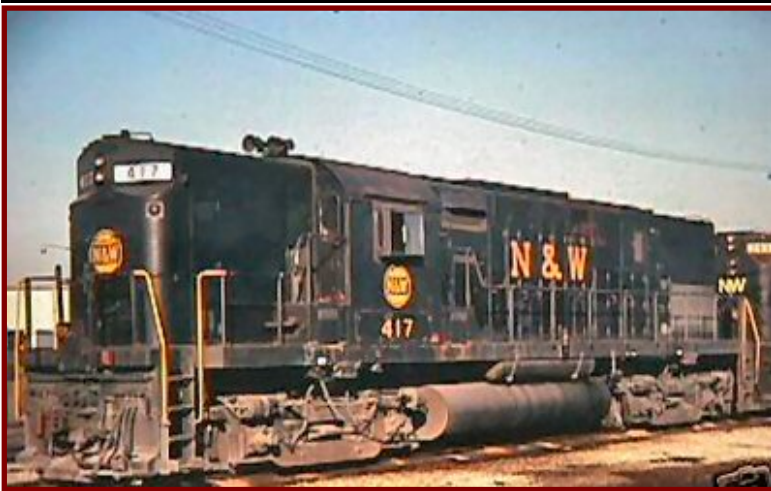
*From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

# C420

## 131 Built - 131 US

Codes: PH = Phase (1), TK = Truck, DB = Dynamic brakes,  
SF = Number of sand fills on low nose.

Original #	Previous #'s	Last #	Date Bt.	PH	TK	DB	SF	Notes
NKP 578	N&W 2578			1/1	B	N	2	1
N&W 413-20				1/2	B	Y	1	1,2



N&W ALCo C420 #417

16 foot fuel tank bulge.  
High short hood

N&W Purchased 8  
NKP had 1 on merger

The N&W owned 8 prior to merger. These were numbered 413-420. One additional C420 was acquired in the merger with the Nickel Plate and renumbered 2578

**Thursdays**  
Are Work Nights - Come join the Fun -  
There's always a project going on from 4:30 to 7:30  
or later

**Saturdays**  
Are Open Sessions for Public Viewing - Sign up to  
help out for 9:30 -12:30 or 12:00 -3:00 or stay the  
day



### From the Chief Engineer's desk:

As many of you already know my June 9<sup>th</sup> meeting with ETSU President Stanton and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Bert Bach, was a very positive one for the

MEMRR and the George L. Carter Railroad Museum. I was named the first Director of the Museum. This directorship is a crucial step in further securing the longevity of the museum during the transition in the university presidency next year and for years to come (see the ETSU Media Release attached). Additionally, we discussed more space in the building for exhibits; but the report from Facilities Management indicates it will not be possible to get additional contiguous display space to our current museum exhibit room. We were granted an additional \$500 in the annual budget for a telephone that I will have installed ASAP. I am directed to discuss our request for exhibit funding with the Director of the University Foundation. It was a very good meeting and we all owe President Stanton our appreciation for his continued interest and support of the club and the museum.

I met with the Vice President for Medical Affairs and Chief Operating Officer, Wilsie Bishop, on Thursday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> to discuss our desire for additional space for exhibits and for a "kids train room". She toured

the rooms across the hall from the museum on Thursday evening with me and we are to get two additional rooms on that side of the corridor, room #110 (240 sq.ft) and room #100B (570 sq.ft.) w/4 windows. These rooms will have to be cleared by movers from Facilities Mgmt, a task that may take several weeks, and we may have to paint them ourselves, but they will be ours very soon. We won't have keys until they are cleared of their contents and turned over to me but the members who were working early on Thursday night got to see them briefly and can answer your questions about what they look like. We are moving a lot of our "stuff" that was under the layouts and in the workroom over to room #108 to use that as a workshop and classroom. We will try to paint and assemble our roundhouse and support buildings over there now that the AC is working. Check it out.

I would like to see a group of interested members form a committee to design the footprints for the 9 x 5 ft. layout that Jack Cope donated to the Club. I think this can be a terrific project with footprints that lift out to make the scenes interchangeable for audiences of different ages, i.e., little kids, big kids, adults, seniors, etc., so we can take it to different audiences and different venues to advertise our club and the railroad museum. I know we have a lot of members who don't currently own a module and may be looking for something to test their creative abilities. Here is a project just made for you. Let's talk about it and get some ideas in the hopper. I can purchase some of the building and other accessories from the university museum budget.

We took orders for Club shirts at the last meeting. If you would like to order a shirt (usually around \$16) please let Hobie know. (contact Hobie Hyder at [wbei@planetec.com](mailto:wbei@planetec.com)). We still have some great Engineer's hats for \$10 with our club logo on the front and the RR Museum patch on the back (see Duane Swank). We also have a limited quantity of kid's sized engineer hats for sale at the museum (\$5.00).

Member Bob Barrett, owner of HobbyTown USA, is moving his store up Roan Street in early August. He could use some help on a Sunday afternoon to move the boxed inventory from the present location to the new store. All of us know of the generous discounts he gives Club members. If you can help please give him your name and phone number so he can give you a call. It should be for one late afternoon/evening only and the more we hands we have the quicker the move will be completed.

Member Gary Cameron is in the initial stages of putting together a big regional train festival that will happen the first weekend in September. He is asking us to participate by keeping the Carter RR Museum open to the public during the event. We need to agree to help by operating the museum layouts over a whole weekend. Let's talk it over briefly at the July meeting. There are no details yet, but

we should be able to host a lot of people interested in railroading and model trains.

We have gained several new members since our last meeting. Please introduce yourself and make them welcome. Our club has come a long way in the time we have been in our new university home and we have been strengthened considerably by the fine people who have paid memberships and joined us to work on the layouts, help us with public operating sessions, and contribute their talents to the whole. Welcome!!!!

Lastly, the Chief Engineer is finished with his university teaching duties until mid-August and Jo Ann and I have planned some birding in Ecuador, and visits to family in Minnesota and Wyoming over the next month. I will miss you all and I know the Club will tick right along just as if I were there with you. Don't expect postcards, but know that I shall be thinking of you and look forward to seeing you in August. Hear that whistle blowing?

Fred Alsop  
President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders  
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum



## News & Information Services

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### Alsop named first director of George L. Carter Railroad Museum at ETSU

JOHNSON CITY—Dr. Fred J. Alsop III has

been named by East Tennessee State University as the first director of the George L. Carter Railroad Museum.

The museum, opened to the public last November, is devoted to the region's historical ties to railroads and features active displays of model railroads. Located in the old ETSU College of Medicine Building on the pedestrian mall, opposite Roy S. Nicks Hall, the museum offers several large layouts of towns and landscapes with running model trains as well as railroad-related items of historical interest.

In announcing the appointment, ETSU President Dr. Paul E. Stanton Jr. spoke to Alsop's investment of time and energy to see the museum realized. "Fred has certainly championed this project all along the way as we have worked to honor the late George L. Carter, who, in fact, made this university possible. Through Fred's commitment and leadership, we are proud to pay tribute to this first ETSU benefactor."

A railroad magnate, industrialist, visionary, and philanthropist, George L. Carter (1857-1936) donated his farm to the state in 1909 for the development of a normal school that became ETSU. Although Carter was a private individual who had no interest in

personal recognition, ETSU, through the museum, is paying homage to his foresight in securing the mountainous route for the then Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railroad throughout the region.

Alsop's personal hobby and interest in model railroads led him to coordinate efforts of local volunteers to create and operate the museum from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. each Saturday. He has been assisted by the members of the Mountain Empire Model Railroad Club, which Alsop serves as president, as they built the largest exhibit, currently act as staff for the museum, and provide countless hours to improving and maintaining the facility.

He hopes that the museum will enhance public knowledge of the major role played by three early railroad lines in the development of the region. Those are the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina (or "Tweetsie"), the Southern (now Norfolk Southern), and Clinchfield (now CSX).

Alsop's vision for the Carter museum includes traveling exhibits for community outreach, increased funding and facilities, special railroading events, a student model railroad club, and a children's room, where youngsters can play safely with age-appropriate model trains.

Alsop invites the public to contribute to the growth of the museum by volunteering as docents; donating old tickets, lanterns, and other railroad memorabilia; and helping to create an oral history collection by sharing family railroad-related stories.

A professor in the ETSU Department of Biological Sciences, Alsop served as chair of that department for eight years. Since his arrival at ETSU in 1972, Alsop has written some 100 scientific papers and articles about ornithology—his specialty. He is the author of 18 books on birds, eight of them jointly published by DK Press and The Smithsonian Institution, including *Birds of North America* and *Birds of Canada*. Currently, he is writing *The Birds of Tennessee* for The University of Tennessee Press.

An internationally known wildlife photographer, he is also an active field biologist and ornithologist, public lecturer, and international natural history tour leader.

Since 1991, he has conducted field workshop classes, training federal and state biologists, wildlife officers, foresters, administrators, and technicians in eight southern states to identify

and conduct a census of birds as part of the international conservation initiative known as Partners-in-Flight.

Alsop served as the 2007-2008 president of the ETSU Faculty Senate. He received the university's Distinguished Faculty Award in 1976 and the ETSU College of Arts and Sciences Research Award in 2002. He has also served on numerous university committees and task forces.

Alsop earned a bachelor's degree at Austin Peay State University in 1964 and continued his education at The University of Tennessee-Knoxville, where he was awarded a master's degree in 1968 and, in 1973, a Ph.D. in zoology with an emphasis on ornithology.

For further information, contact Alsop at (423) 439-6838 or via [alsopf@etsu.edu](mailto:alsopf@etsu.edu).

## MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS

Minutes  
June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008

### Call To Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by F. Alsop, club president.

### Recognition of Guests and Visitors:

There were no guests or visitors; 12 members were present including two new members – Daniel and Charlene McLeud.

### Officers' Reports

**Secretary's Report:** M. Doran-Bleck reported the minutes from the April meeting were published in the June 2008 issue of the *Signal Bridge*. Minutes were accepted as printed.

**Newsletter Editor's Report:** Both electronic and hardcopy versions of the *Signal Bridge* have been distributed. Additional copies have been placed in the literature racks in the club room. As always, there is an invitation to become a *Signal Bridge* author.

**Treasurer's Report:** D. Swank reported a balance forwarded of \$1,099.38 with income of \$86.00. Expenses were \$211.64 leaving a balance on hand of \$973.74. Obligated funds were \$789.33 leaving an unobligated balance of \$184.41.

**Webmaster's Report:** J. Edwards reported that the website and email accounts were working well following migration to new servers by our web service provider. Some discussion has occurred regarding a web page on the ETSU website.

**Vice-President's Report:** J. Carter reported the need for additional program ideas for the coming months. To date:

July – D. Swank – "The wreck of 611"  
August – T. Bleck-Doran – "When the Mail Moved by Rail"  
Reschedule of H. Hyder's – "Favorite Websites"

**President's Report:** F. Alsop provided a recap of his meeting with ETSU President Stanton and discussed a vision for the future of the club including expanded space. See "From the Chief Engineer's Desk" columns in the June and July issues of the *Signal Bridge*.

### Old Business:

- Engineer Hats for MEMRR Members:** D. Swank has the finished. Hats have the revised Club Logo and George L. Carter Museum on embroidered patches. Cost to members will be \$10.
- Jack Cope's 5x7 HO Layout Gift:** The layout has been moved to the new work room. F. Alsop recommended that Scenery and

structures be interchangeable to accommodate theme displays e.g.- Thomas The Train, Harry Potter, local railroading. Members were invited to submit ideas for the layout. The layout can also be used for demonstration clinics.

- N Gauge Layout:** Additional track needs were identified including the purchase of a Peco #8 curved turnout. Motion to purchase the turnout made. Passed.
- G Gauge Layout:** Three sound units (Honky Tonk, Saw Mill, Loco Sounds) have been installed. Ideas for completing interiors for village building (saloon in particular) were discussed. D. Firestone is installing interior lighting for several structures on the layout.
- HO Layout:** Work continues on the locomotive facilities with the base for the turntable and roundhouse built. Discussion on the Depot installation included the purchase of two turnouts: one for a spur to an Express Agency building, The other a curved turnout for a passenger car service track adjacent to the passenger platforms. Motion made to purchase turnouts. Passed. J. Edwards reported plans to break the mainline into 4 power districts. Upgrading the wiring is essential since much of the trunk line dates to the club's beginning.
- Club Brochures:** T. Bleck-Doran reported that a draft single panel brochure has been mocked up. Photos of the club layouts have been taken..
- Other Old Business: None.**

### New Business:

- Room 112:** The club now has access to the room across the hall from the museum. Discussion centered around possible uses: work room, clinic and demonstration space, housing the 5x9 layout, etc. Members were invited to make suggestions..
- Jonesborough Days:** The club voted to pass on this year's invite to participate with a display at the Jonesborough Days celebration due to a number of members being away for the holiday and having other obligations..

**Announcements:** None

**Program:** T. Bleck-Doran presented a slide show clinic on **Norfolk & Western ALCo Odd Ball Diesels..**

**Club Events:** None

**June Meeting:** 7:00 PM, Tuesday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, Room 312 Brown Hall ETSU. Social time and dinner for those who wish to meet prior to business session: 5:45 PM, El Toritos Mexican restaurant on State of Franklin in the Kroger shopping center complex west of ETSU campus.

**Adjournment:** the meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM

Submitted by Mary Doran-Bleck, Secretary